

# **Making The Link**

**Domestic Violence &  
Alcohol and Other Drugs  
March 2004**

# Making The Link

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**“Alcohol is associated with a substantial proportion of human violence, and perpetrators are often under the influence of alcohol”**

# Making The Link

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- Domestic Violence studies documents high rates of alcohol and other drug (**AOD**) involvement
- AOD impairs judgment
- Reduces inhibitions
- Increases aggression
- Alcoholism and child abuse (including incest) seem tightly intertwined as well

# Making The Link

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- The connection between child abuse and alcohol abuse “may take the form of alcohol abuse in parents or alcohol intoxication at the time of the abuse incident.”
- Most often abusers tend to be heavy drinkers and usually this will extend over the course of their lifetime.

# Making The Link

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- Alcohol abuse consistently “emerges” as a significant predictor of marital violence”
- Usually the range of violence is anywhere from **moderate** to **severe** physical violence
- Studies have shown a significant association between **battering** incidents and alcohol abuse.

# Making The Link

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**A dual problem with alcohol and other drugs is even more likely to be associated with the more severe battering incidents than is alcohol by itself.**

- ..64% of child abuse and neglect is associated with AOD**
- ..American couples found rates of DV were almost 15% higher in households where husbands were often drunk**
- ..Battered women are at increased risk of attempting suicide and/or abusing their own children**
- ..Alcohol is present in more than 50% of all incidents of DV**

# Men More Likely to Abuse Partners on Days When

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## They Drink...

- The odds of any male-to-female aggression are eight times higher on days when these men drink alcohol than on days with no alcohol consumption
  - The report supports the fact that alcohol use plays some role in the facilitation of **aggression** in the marital relationship...
- ..Alcohol use and/or abuse is not a causative factor of DV but instead is a **contributing** factor...more like a **catalyst** for the abuse.

# What Does That Mean in Simple English ?

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There are already pre-existing conditions occurring in the relationship, which usually involves a number of behaviors: (control issues, money, jealousy, obsessive traits, fears of losing that person, dominance, anger, psychological/psychiatric problems)

The use of **AOD** merely contributes to the aggressive behaviors often exhibited and seen in DV situations.



# Abuse

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- Abuse takes a thousand forms. It touches our lives every day, whether it's occurring in our house, the house next door, or the house across the city.
- Economic status will not prevent abuse
- Gender will not establish who is the abuser and who is the abused.
- **An Abuser wants to control his or her victim and will use whatever method to gain that control**

# First Year of Marriage Sets a Pattern...

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- Couples who argue a lot during the first year of marriage are more likely to have **violence** erupt in the next two years, if the husband is a heavy drinker and the wife is not.
- Usually followed by arguments over the amount consumed, money spent on alcohol, legal issues, and loss of intimacy, loss of jobs, health issues, and overall negative impact on family security.

# Abuse

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- Abuse requires two participants: one who causes the abuse and one who is the enabler.
- Abuse inflicted on a child is doubly evil since a child does not have the independence to free themselves or get help
- However, an adult in an abusive relationship could survive on his or her own, given the strength to do so.

# Abuse

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- **Abuse is the silent, insidious destroyer of self-confidence**
- **Many in abusive relationships believe they have done something to deserve the treatment they are receiving.**
- **Abuse may escalate to physical violence but non -physical abuse itself can be destructive and painful**
- **Many forms of abuse can be hidden from your closest friends ...**

**(Jekyll and Hyde personalities)**

# Abuse

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- Verbal, emotional, and mental abuse leaves no visible scars
- In it's most hostile/obnoxious form, mental abuse can destroy a life as effectively as physical disease
- Abuse can become a learned behavior wherein those who were abused become abusers as adults ...

**(COA) or Children of Alcoholics**

# Domestic Violence

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- Domestic violence is a pattern of controlling and coercive behavior which can involve physical, sexual, economic, emotional and psychological abuse.
- Affect people who are married, divorced , living together, dating.
- People from all social, economic, racial, religious, and ethnic group.
- **Anyone can be a victim but women are by far the most common victims.**

# Does Your Partner ...

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- **Constantly criticize you**
- **Behave in an overprotective way or become extremely jealous**
- **Threaten to hurt you, your children, pets , family members, friends, or himself?**
- **Prevent you from seeing family friends**
- **Get suddenly angry or lose his temper?**
- **Destroy personal property**
- **Deny you access to family resources like the car, bank accounts, credit cards - controls all the finances**

# Does Your Partner...

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- **Intimidate you or manipulate you or your children**
- **Hit, punch, slap, kick, shove or bite you**
- **Prevent you from going where you want to go**
- **Makes you have sex that makes you uncomfortable**
- **Humiliates you, cut you down, or embarrass you in front of others**



If you answered “yes” to any  
of these questions....

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**You may be a victim of  
Domestic Violence...**

**or**

**You may be a abuser -  
committing the crime of  
Domestic Violence against your  
partner.**

# It's All About Trying to Control

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- **Domestic Violence is not so much about a “loss of control” as it is about always wanting to always be in**

**Total Control**

# Abusers ....

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- Do not see themselves as perpetrators
- They have elaborate **denial** systems designed to **justify** or excuse their actions.
- Most are controlling, manipulative
- Believe they have a pre-ordained right to be in charge of the relationship

# Abuser ...

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**One abuser described his behavior as:**

**“It was like having a new toy. I controlled the buttons and I could make her do whatever I wanted. I wanted to control her for the simple reason that I knew I could do it...**

**It was a powerful feeling - a feeling that I never wanted to give up.”.**

# The Abuse Cycle

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- **Build-up phase** - The tension builds
- **Stand-over phase** - Verbal attacks increase
- **Explosion phase** - A violent outburst occurs
- **Remorse phase** - You shouldn't have pushed me, it was your fault
- **Pursuit Phase** - It will never happen again, I promise
- **Honeymoon phase** - See, we don't have any problems!

# Women as Batterers...

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As one partner stated:

**“ I am still uncertain about the role that alcohol played in the years of violent outbursts I experienced in my former marriage. One thing I am sure of, violence and abuse are not limited to men”.**

# Women and Battering...

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- We know it happens –
- Men, however, most often do not report the abuse and there is no intervention by law enforcement.
- Alcohol can be a catalyst in these situations
- Usually there are deep seeded mental disorders
- Aggressive behaviors – hostile – anger may feed into the scenario.
- A learned behavior that is carried forward into her own marriage

# Why Do We Stay in a Violent Relationship

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- We love the person
- Hope the situation changes
- Try to remember the good times
- Fear of being by alone
- Fear of leaving and repercussions
- Children
- No job or skills to get a job
- No money
- Bills
- Where can I go?



# Domestic Violence

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Domestic Violence is about  
“**power and control**” over your partner.  
Most often the need for control is a  
**common trigger** that can lead to  
violence and even death for the victim.

Alcohol use and abuse is a contributing  
problem that only acerbates the already  
existing conditions for violence to erupt.